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notice matters bearing on these subjects. The Medical Transactions of the College of Physicians, and the Dublin Hospital Reports which have recently appeared, shall receive our earliest attention.

PROFESSIONAL SKETCHES—No. I. MR. LAWRENCE.

The stormy part of Mr. Lawrence's career is now over. We can view him calmly stationed in that port to which all his wishes had aspired. He has quietly succeeded to the chair of the venerable Abernethy—he has a seat in the College Council—he is first surgeon to the largest hospital in London—he has many places, lucrative and honorary—enjoys considerable practice—and, in short, now that the alarm about his tenets concerning mind and matter (in which “’twas no matter what he said”) has subsided, he is fortunate enough to be generally looked upon as a steady, orthodox, extremely clever sort of man. But there is a mighty falling off in this, after all, from what he had once promised to be. Time was, and that not long ago, when all the world spoke of him as one of the spirits of the age—a bustling, agitating, independent personage, gifted with genius and brilliant abilities—intrepidly resolved to speak his mind at all hazards—at the hazard of losing the patronage of all that was great and respectable in Christian society—at the hazard of forfeiting the friendship of his earliest well-wishers and admirers, and the good opinion of the most distinguished of his professional brethren. A greater *sensation* certainly few men have had the good or bad fortune to excite; and it ends in this, that he now is considered, by all who still continue to talk about him, as a man of much talent, a clever man, and a man of energy and fearlessness, when occasion calls upon him for the exertion of such qualities. But the *sensation* is most wonderfully allayed, though he still deservedly ranks as a public character.

Whoever expects to see in Mr. Lawrence's *personnel* any thing corresponding to the noise he has made in the world, will be disappointed. See him, for instance, on the great show-day—the first of October—the opening of the medical session in London. Let us pay him a visit at the theatre of St. Bartholomew. You expect to find him a stout gentleman of about fifty, dealing bold eloquence around him, attacking old systems, and setting up a new order of things in the medical world: hear the report of an actual eye and ear witness, who saw and heard him for the first time on the said grand day of exhibition. And perhaps the impressions made by a first appearance on an exact observer like our friend, may be preferable to the more studied remarks of persons who have seen Mr. Lawrence more frequently. Mr. Lawrence is, in fact, one of those characters in which the prominent points, if there be any, become very soon rounded off by closer acquaintance; and ten out of every twelve who are in the habit of seeing him often, will assure you that there is nothing very particular about him—nothing, in truth, remarkable, except perhaps his want of remarkableness.

Our young friend's notice of him runs as follows:—“I gave up some appointments and all the other introductions that are usually given on this day, (October 1st,) in order to make sure of seeing the lion of the London schools. It wanted still ten minutes of the appointed time of his entrance (half-past two) when I reached St. Bartholomew's. The little theatre was much crowded, though it was certainly not difficult to put it into this state, for two hundred and fifty moderate sized persons, I

should imagine, would fill it to suffocation, gallery and all. It is a small circular apartment, pretty lofty, and lighted entirely from above ; a narrow gallery of two seats runs all the way round—but the benches below, which are piled steeply one above another, are discontinued for a short space to admit the ingress from the little museum behind, and to give the lecturer some room to display his drawings and preparations. In the middle of this space, and just beneath the gallery, is the marble bust of Mr. Abernethy. The lecturer's table stands exactly in the centre of the theatre: and I may mention, that both table and chair, and all the other equipments of the place, are exceedingly plain, if not mean, for this the most celebrated of the London schools—the school in which Pott and Abernethy taught and were eminent. The expectant auditors were tranquil and decorous; all of them seemed to be pupils, or aspirants to that honour—and business the object of all. I could see no distinguished visitor come to grace or countenance the opening of the session, as on grand field-days in Dublin. But at length the lecturer made his appearance, and was hailed with hearty and repeated cheers—thunders of hand-clapping. I must confess I was not much struck with his presence; he was simply a plain, gentlemanly man, not above forty-five years of age, with nothing cheerful or animated in his countenance; and he seemed to submit to the *annoyance* of the thundering welcome rather with patience than pleasure. He stands somewhat above the middle height, is light-haired, and delicate looking; and his features, though not unmarked or uninteresting, are yet pale and deficient in animation. During the noise consequent upon his *entrée*, he stood beside his chair in what I thought rather an ungraceful, awkward position, and with looks demurely submissive; but that being over, he paused for several seconds apparently wrapt in meditation, and choosing how he should speak the first words. He then began: nor can I say that I was better pleased with his voice; it was neither full nor by any means musical to my ear—it was hard, and its cadences rather too guttural. Mr. Lawrence, I should add, to finish my rough draft of him, seemed, moreover, studiously to shun the sable livery of science, or at least of the profession. He was gaily dressed in a light-coloured waistcoat, blue frock, and black cravat; and wore a pair of slate-coloured gloves, which he displayed pretty prominently with a little occasional action. Of the lecture it is unnecessary to say any thing—it is before the public, accurately reported as he delivered it last year in the same place; and I cannot find upon referring to this report in the Medical Gazette, that what he spoke on the late occasion differed from it in the slightest material degree: and this though he spoke without notes. I have no doubt that he is largely indebted to his memory, and speaks all that he has set down for himself, and no more. Nor would he seem to possess the power of ready and unpremeditated eloquence. I observed that when there was some disturbance about the middle of the lecture, arising from some persons who were impatient of their want of accommodation near the door, Mr. Lawrence, though interrupted, never interfered; he looked confused, lowered his voice, paused a little, but took care not to lose the thread of his discourse. I could see in him, in short, nothing of *the* Lawrence I had expected to see; no demonstration of that spirit which marked his conduct and demeanour in times gone by; nothing but a few paltry sneers at existing establishments—even at the College of Surgeons, so long the butt of his vituperation, until he lately thought proper to accept a place in its management. I came away, as you may suppose, without any particular desire to hear or see Mr. Lawrence again."

This is an unvarnished narrative ; and we believe most men who have seen and known Mr. Lawrence, will allow it to be correct. Be it now our task to add some remarks on the circumstances of the career of Mr. Lawrence—they shall be brief ; and certainly, ought not to be uninteresting. Of that career generally, it may be said, that it presents nothing very singular in its aspect : it is that of a man, whose professional education was early taken in hands, and taken care of—whose habits of industry were early cultivated and encouraged—who has profited in every possible way by the experience of both ancients and moderns : a man, ambitious of popularity, almost to a crime ; and perhaps, only in an inferior degree, desirous of those advantages of fortune, which are such useful appurtenances to a popular man : a man, who, after having obtained almost as much of both popularity and affluence as he could reasonably have desired, and as probably he is likely ever to obtain, now rests upon his oars ; tired and fatigued, after a stormy passage, and sees not sufficient motive for committing himself again to the troubled waters. We shall look into these circumstances more closely.

Mr. Lawrence may be said to have been born and bred in the profession. His father, who was also his first instructor, was a surgeon of respectability in Gloucestershire. While yet a boy, he was placed as a pupil or an apprentice, under the care of Mr. Abernethy, with whom he laid the foundation of that character which he has long since established. Mr. Abernethy made him work incessantly, and not more diligently in the practical business of his profession, than in the literary studies connected with it. One of his tasks was the translation of the *Opus Magnum* of Haller, which he is said to have executed pervasively. A habit of literary labour was thus inculcated ; and it is commonly allowed, that few men are better acquainted with the literature of medicine and surgery than Mr. Lawrence ; but there is a medium in this, as in most other sublunary good things. It has been conceived by many, and apparently with some justice, that the early years of the subject of our sketch, might have been more usefully employed in the development and exercise of original conceptions ; that too early an acquaintance with the works of his predecessors fastened trammels upon his mind, which he has never been able completely to get rid of ; and that to this source, in short, may his greatest defect be ascribed—his want of originality. Perhaps this view of Mr. Lawrence's mental constitution may not seem quite so visionary or hypercritical, when it is considered of what materials his productions are composed, and how freely he has availed himself, in every instance, of the labours of others. The lectures on the natural history of man, are a compilation from beginning to end ; and even for the germ of that work, the obnoxious *materiel* principles which it contains, Mr. Lawrence is strictly no farther accountable, than in so far as he has catered them, and served them up. The same may be said of his articles on Comparative Anatomy in Rees' Cyclopaedia, which he undertook after Dr. Macartney had resigned them, upon being appointed to the Dublin professorship—those articles are most freely borrowed from the French. And with regard to the lectures on surgery, perhaps no man of Mr. Lawrence's standing in the profession could contrive to deliver a course less original. So much for the early habit he acquired of dealing with other men's ideas.

He was still a very young man when he was appointed one of the surgeons to St. Bartholomew's hospital ; nor could he have been much more than thirty when he delivered his celebrated lectures on man before the College of Surgeons, as their Professor of Anatomy and Physiology. It

is generally admitted, indeed, that his best apology for the course which he pursued on that occasion, is to be sought in the circumstance of his comparative youth when entrusted with the duties of the chair ; but it was the same circumstance that endowed him with that impetuosity which gave such a tone of firmness to all his dictations. He could not, or would affect not to see why it should not be permitted him to broach what opinions he pleased, and to utter the conclusions to which his immature task allured him, in opposition to the established sentiments of some of the ablest of mankind. But this was not all. In his second exhibition, when entering upon another series of those lectures, his resentment at the obstruction which had been offered to the dissemination of his principles, bordered absolutely upon fierceness. He seems to think it little short of persecution to be opposed in any way ; and after he had received the thanks of the College, and published his opinions to the world, that his views should be received with so little deference : the moment of publication (which he consented to in an evil hour) was, in fact, the crisis for the commencement of a crusade upon him. But all judgment and discretion on his part sunk beneath his irascibility ; and he received the onset of his opponents with a spirit and determination of which he has lived to repent at leisure. His feelings, or at least the language in which he represented them, may be judged of by the following indignant burst : “ My opinions are published—they were not brought forward secretly—they have never shunned the light—and they shall never be concealed nor compromised. Without this freedom of inquiry and speech the duty of your professors would be irksome and humiliating—they would be dishonoured in their own eyes, and in the estimation of the public. These privileges, gentlemen, shall never be surrendered by me. I will not be set down nor cried down by any person in any place, or under any pretexts. However flattering it may be to my vanity to wear this gown, if it involve any sacrifice of independence—the smallest dereliction of the right to examine freely the subjects on which I address you, and to express fearlessly the result of my investigations—I would strip it off instantly.”

This was certainly a bold tone ; but it would not succeed ; it passed for bravado among the more judicious and reflecting members of society, and some stern remonstrances against it issued from the press. Among others, Mr. Abernethy thought fit to enter the arena with his quondam pupil, and summarily to chastise his indiscretion. He accused Mr. Lawrence of the unworthy design of propagating opinions detrimental to society, and of endeavouring to enforce them for the purpose of loosening those restraints on which the welfare of mankind depends. But no argument to the modesty of the pupil was of any avail. He replied in a tone of scorn nothing inferior to his first angry defiance ; but by the whole proceeding he rather lost ground than otherwise—he certainly did not advance his cause by his mode of conducting the controversy. The period, however, of the *melée* was as short as it was violent. The time presently came when the philosophy of our Professor was to be put to the test—a test not quite so severe or inquisitorial as Galileo's, yet equally efficacious in producing a like result. The interest, the pecuniary interest of the philosopher was likely to be affected, and his principles were not found to be so firmly fixed as to present an obstacle to the current of his prosperity. His character had sunk rapidly in the estimation of, at least, the religious, if not the most influential part of the community ; and in 1819, when the period of the annual re-election of the surgeon to Bethlehem Hospital arrived, Mr. Lawrence was rejected. This was the first practical reprisal on him—it was sudden too. But he had still many admirers,

who were resolved to uphold him for his bold independence. They rallied round him, and he was subsequently reinstated in the place; but upon the understanding that he should put forth no more of those offensive tenets. A few years after, however, he was upon the point of being thrown out again; but a timely letter to Sir R. C. Glynn, the President of Bethlehem, was deemed a sufficient recantation to justify his return. Mr. Waithman, too, made wonderful exertions in his favour on the occasion, and ultimately secured his election by a majority of two to one. It may be observed, that the "recantation" is of a very qualified character; it, in reality, goes no farther than to express sorrow for his *imprudence* in publishing his opinions, and winds up with a solemn promise never to do the like again:—"Experience," he writes, "and reflection have only tended to convince me more strongly, that the publication of certain passages in those writings was highly improper—to increase my regret for having sent them forth to the world—to make me satisfied with the measure of withdrawing them from public circulation, and consequently to resolve me not only never to reprint them, but also never to publish any thing more on similar subjects." And so ended the polemical part of Mr. Lawrence's career. Since this period, he has not only satisfied his former opponents by his ready and voluntarily imposed silence upon the controverted points, but it is even said that he has succeeded in ingratiating himself with many of them by his reputed orthodoxy. What actual change his opinions underwent at the period in question, or what they may be at present, we will not pretend to say; nor, indeed, have we any right to inquire farther than he has himself condescended to inform us—and that, we believe, amounts to no more than negative information. His book we know has fallen into the most signal oblivion. For our part, we must confess we never could see upon what ground Mr. Lawrence should be deemed entitled to the merit of originality in the matter of this work. The same views had been frequently brought forward in times past, and as frequently exposed; and the substance of them is distinctly traceable to a very distant era. It may not be improper to enter a little more fully into a detail of the subject. Mr. Lawrence's hypothesis (we will admit it to be his for argument sake) is not a very complicated one—perhaps its chief merit consists in its simplicity. According to him, organised differs from inorganised matter merely by the addition of certain *properties*, which are called vital, as sensibility and irritability. Masses of matter endowed with these new *properties* become organs, and systems of organs, constitute an animal frame, and execute distinct purposes and functions—for functions, and purposes carried into execution, are here synonymous. "Life is the assemblage of all the functions, (or purposes,) and the general result of their exercise." Life, therefore, upon this hypothesis, instead of being a two-fold or three-fold reality, running in a combined stream or in parallel lines, has no reality whatever—it has no *esse* or independent existence. It is a mere assemblage of *purposes* and accidental or temporary *properties*—a series of phenomena (as Mr. Lawrence has himself expressed it)—a name without a thing. "We know not," says he, "the nature of the truth that unites these phenomena, though we are sensible that a connexion must exist; and this conviction is sufficient to induce us to give it a *name*, which the vulgar regard as the sign of a particular principle—though, in fact, that name commonly indicates the *assemblage* of the *phenomena* which have occasioned its formation." The human frame, on this supposition, must be simply accounted a sort of barrel-organ, possessing a systematic arrangement of parts, played

upon by peculiar powers, and executing particular pieces, or *purposes*; and life is the music produced by the general assemblage, or result of the harmonious action: so long as either the vital or the mechanical instrument is duly wound up by a regular supply of food, or of the wind, so long the music will continue; but both are worn out by their own action, and when the machine will no longer work, the life has the same close as the music, and accordingly,

“——— *redit in nihilum, quod fuit ante nihil.*”

There is, however, nothing new in this doctrine, nor in the manner of explaining it. It was first started in the time of Aristotle, by Aristoximis, a pupil of his, who was admirably skilled in music, and by profession a physician; and it was propounded to the world under the name of the “System of Harmony,” either from the author’s fondness for music, or from his comparing the human frame to a musical instrument, and his regarding life as the result of all its parts acting in accordance, and producing a general and harmonious effect.

But whatever may be Mr. Lawrence’s claims to the merit of having been the first to broach this doctrine so humiliating to human nature, we should conceive that they are at present not worth fighting for. The book is fallen into disregard—it has sunk to the level to which its proper station belonged, and from which it is not likely soon to be disturbed. In this respect the opinion of Lord Eldon, though greatly abused at the time, seems to have been singularly proper. The work was pirated, and the author applied to the Chancellor for an injunction to restrain the audacious publishers, and to protect his right; but the application was refused on the ground that the book was irreligious and of an immoral tendency, and therefore undeserving of protection. The first feeling in the public mind upon this decision was, that it was inexpedient and perilous, if not absurd. A great outcry was raised; but the event has shown that the decision was not only consistent with law, but with the strictest prudence; it was, in fact, the wisest measure that could have been adopted. The restriction being refused, every man could cheaply possess himself of the work, and form his own judgment upon it; and it was in consequence very soon found that the intrinsic merits of the production would not endure this scrutiny: whereas, had the injunction been granted, an apparently superior value would have been stamped upon it; it would have been bought up, and taken at a false estimate; criticism would have been enlisted on the side of the party who had been exposed to aggression; and an erroneous opinion of the excellence of the publication would have gone abroad. The result of the application does his Lordship infinite credit, and strengthens all our previously formed notions of his good sound sense. No person now thinks of the volume of which we speak, except with surprise that it should have been the cause of so much controversy and contention.

We should gladly be silent on some later transactions in the career of Mr. Lawrence, but truth demands of us a few brief remarks, on one or two more heads. The love of popularity has ever been his ruling passion—the rock, we would almost say, upon which he has been more than once nearly wrecked. A spirit of reform had been for years (and, perhaps, it is not yet subsided) haunting and agitating the members of the College of Surgeons; Mr. Lawrence early identified himself with the discontented party; became eventually their champion, and did battle for them with all his force and fervour. He headed them in all their inroads, for some time upon the council; and vowed never to desert the cause, until their united exertions should be crowned with success in the

procural of a new charter with a thorough reform of all abuses. Nor did he hesitate upon all occasions to denounce the governing body, and to join in the cry of vituperation as loudly as the rest. But of late, an extraordinary, an unnatural calm has ensued. Mr. Lawrence has accepted a seat at this very unreformed board ; and in this circumstance alone can an explanation of the phenomenon be sought.

The general opinion which seems to prevail at present, touching the character and conduct of Mr. Lawrence, is that of his singular but ill regulated regard to the pursuit of his peculiar ambition. All men who see him now, and have not known him formerly, profess their wonder where that wicked spirit may be fled, that once kept the religious world in a roar, and the council in a continual turmoil ; but there are not wanting among the wonderers many who, by their shrewd and significant glances, show that they suspect from whence the tranquillity, the *quietus* is derived. Mr. Lawrence, in fact, has ceased to make a noise in the world. He practises his profession diligently—and, we believe, enjoys extensive practice ; performs his duties admirably well as an hospital surgeon ; and discharges his functions as a teacher of his art with all due attention and success. He is now, at length, in the right road of establishing for himself a solidly respectable reputation ; and though he may not now come before the public in that conspicuous, but questionable shape, in which he has for some time figured, he will find, we are persuaded, his present course, if not equally interesting, most assuredly equally profitable.

As a professional man, Mr. Lawrence ranks most deservedly high. In all the more valuable accomplishments of a good surgeon, he is inferior to few. He may not be so dexterous and capital an operator as Sir Astley Cooper, or Mr. Key ; but in all that tact, and judgment, and skill, which is quite as valuable, as dexterity in the use of the knife—he cannot, perhaps, be excelled. It is his boast, as it should be that of every surgeon who loves the art he professes, that the necessity for performing operations—thanks to the great advances that have been made in the knowledge of medical treatment—has wonderfully declined of late years. In St. Bartholomew's hospital, we have heard him say, the number of operations now annually performed, is not half what it was thirty years ago ; and the decrease has been progressive within the intervening period. This is a glorious testimony to the progress of sound professional principles.

As an author we have noticed Mr. Lawrence pretty fully ; we shall merely add that his style of writing is as elegant and polished as his research upon all occasions is extensive and profound. And he speaks as he writes. His language in the discussion of professional subjects (in the Medico Chirurgical Society, for example) is as correct and fluently uttered as if it had been written first and committed to memory afterwards, whilst the spirit of his replies never fails to elicit the most unequivocal expressions of admiration.

SCHOOLS OF SURGERY IN IRELAND.

Having given an outline of the Introductory Lecture delivered by Mr. Lawrence, at the commencement of the Session in London, it might be expected that we should not pass in silence the opening of the various Schools of Surgery in our own city ; but they took place so late in the